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the coast is broken by three large inlets, allowing of safe anchorage for schooners, with comparatively easy access to the shore, and so affording sites for coco-nut plantations, maintained for the production of copra, which, except for a little fishing for trochus shell, is the only possibility the country offers to white men. Between and behind these plantations are more native villages. The hinterland soon breaks into foot-hills, and behind these rises range after range of heavily forested mountains, a difficult region, much of which has not yet been explored. The interior is volcanic, culminating, as far as the northern half of the island is concerned, in the active volcano Balbi (9,500 ft.), an object of mysterious dread to the natives, who place there the home of their dead.

The peninsula at the north-western end of the island, the scene of many of the activities described in the following pages, slopes gently down from the cliffs on its northern shore, to a flat sandy beach bordering the bay which forms its southern boundary, some five miles distant (Pl. 1 *b*). The interior of this peninsula is covered with what I take to be secondary forest; the whole of it has probably been cleared at one time or another by the natives for their taro gardens, the positions of which they must change frequently.

A cleared track, known as 'the Government road', runs round the greater part of the coast of Buka, and, in places, when sufficiently dry, is possible for wheeled vehicles, enabling the planters to run a lorry for the collection of copra. There is a similar road along the north coast of Bougainville and down the east coast for some ninety miles, as far as Kieta, the place of residence of the District Officer and the only settlement other than isolated plantations on the island. This road is, in dry weather, also practicable for wheeled traffic for rather more than ten miles to the east of Buka Passage, but after that it encounters the Umu Mountains, which, though not high, are steep, and thenceforward a succession of rivers (innocent of bridges) and hilly patches make it improbable that the road will be available for any but pedestrians for a long time to come. It affords pleasant walking, and is much used by the natives in their numerous comings and goings, to visit relatives, to exchange commodities, or merely for fun. The people of each village are held responsible for keeping in traversable condition the stretch of road for a certain distance on either side of their village. They are supposed to work on it one day a week. The women do most of the work.

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It was always made clear that the taboo on knowing about these things did not apply to me, as a white woman, but only to the women of their own people, so I have no reason to think that anything was purposely concealed.

A boy usually goes through the *wapi* ceremony at the age of about eight or nine, judging from the size of the younger of those wearing it (Pl. 20 *a*). But if there is a shortage of food and no ceremony is being held, or if his family are unable to take their share in providing the necessary payments, both in ceremonial currency and in food, his participation may be delayed until he is a good deal older. Some children undergo it still younger, but if, on being sent to the bush for the seclusion preceding the ceremony, they cry for their mothers, they are sent back to wait for a subsequent occasion. One small boy at Kurtatchi who had been thus sent home was only about seven at the time of my visit, though the *wapi* had been held some time back. The *upi* which had been prepared for him was hidden in the bush, where it still remained when the account was given to me. As a rule, every boy from those about nine up to those almost arrived at young manhood (Pl. 20 *b*) will be found wearing the hat. The decision as to whether a boy shall put on the hat at a forthcoming *wapi* ceremony rests with the boy's father, and depends partly upon whether he possesses the necessary length of ceremonial currency (*imun*) which he must pay to one of the old men of *tsunaun* rank to make the boy an *upi*. This man must not be a member of the boy's lineage.

The *wapi* ceremony is preceded by a period of seclusion in the depths of the bush. The day upon which the boys must go to the bush is fixed at the discretion of the *tsunaun tʃan*, that is, the leading man of rank in the group of villages concerned, who will arrange it when a suitable number of candidates is available. The time spent in seclusion is called *wawilbē*. It used to last for a year, as far as I could ascertain, but of late has been cut down to about three months, owing, they say, to the fact that the District Officer does not like the boys to be absent when he comes round to inspect the village, to line the people up for payment of head-tax, and so on. One of the District Officers told me that he was sometimes asked to give permission for the boys to be absent from such a roll-call for three months, and to ask any other officers who might be visiting the village not to require their presence; this he was willing to do.

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been a very large and important taro garden he would have done so. The people of Tabut do not keep to the old customs as strictly as the Kurtatchi people; they have been for a longer time subject to the ministrations of a native mission teacher who is trying to make them stop all the ceremonies connected with the *urar*. It may be that this was a contributory factor. The customary rules were also relaxed so far as to permit the boys wearing the *upi* to assist at the preparations, and the women wore their hoods, neither of which was allowed at the Kurtatchi ceremony.

Coco-nuts

Coco-nuts are cultivated by all the coast natives. They do not flourish in the mountain districts.

The following are the terms applied to the coco-nut at various stages in its development:

Stage of growth.	*Kurtatchi dialect.*	*Petats dialect.*
Generic term used for the nut at all stages, and for the coco-nut palm	*ūir*	*ūel*
Very young nut	*kukūts*	*teō*
Young nut before it contains liquid		*pēsis* or *pēli*
Nut containing liquid before 'meat' appears	*konpēn*	*kakarut*
Nut with thin layer of meat at the creamy stage ('drinking coco-nut')	*mapur*	*irabil*
Nut with meat a little firmer (also used for drinking)	*wisi*	*kuvo*
Nut containing a little liquid and thick meat (the liquid at this stage is bitter and is not considered palatable)	*wakamitskoma*	*rut*
Nut the meat of which has hardened ('dry' coco-nut)	*mukas* or *makas*	*lap*
Mature nut the outer skin of which is not yet dry	*arop*	*pitor*
Nut the kernel of which has become spongy	*awan*	*tunun*
Nut which has become dry and has fallen to the ground		*tus* or *alaun*
Nut which has sprouted		*hala*

The Government encourages the natives to plant coco-nut palms, requiring trees to be started for every child born. Apart from the use of the nut as food and drink, the meat is dried in the sun or on platforms over a fire, to make copra, which is taken by the planters in exchange for trade goods, such as loin-cloths, knives, &c., or for shillings, with which the head-tax of 10*s*. per year on every adult male must be paid. But now that the copra market has fallen upon evil days, it is becoming increasingly difficult for

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showing the ramifications of the system. The people of Petats obtained some pots at Malasang in exchange for women's hoods. The pots they bartered to the people of Lontis in exchange for taro. The Lontis people used the pots to pay for pigs, which they intended to sell, as opportunity offered, for ceremonial currency made of shell disks (*beroan*), which was destined eventually to form part of the property changing hands in respect of a marriage.

Purchases from white men or Chinese store-keepers are usually paid for in copra, the rates varying with the current market-price of that commodity. A certain fixed part of the wages of indentured labourers is paid in shillings, some of which also find their way into the store-keepers' tills, though the main use of them is to pay the Government head-tax of 10*s*. on each adult male. The goods generally bought are sticks of tobacco, knives and axes, loin-cloths, trade beads, belts, and sometimes, if a man has recently returned from labour and money is plentiful, mouth-organs and bottles of scent.

Pigs are sometimes purchased locally from white planters or Chinese store-keepers. One of the latter, who had a store on the mainland of Buka nearly opposite Petats, used to make the natives pay as much as £10 or £12 in English (or Australian) money for a large fat pig, when he knew that it was specially wanted for some great occasion.

Sticks of tobacco (plug twist) and, to a smaller extent, shillings are now coming into favour as a means of trading among the natives themselves, 3 sticks of tobacco being recognized as the equivalent of a shilling, or goods to that value. They also recognize as a unit the sum of £5, which they call, using pidgin-English, a *fius*. This word is sometimes rather arbitrarily used when it is required to indicate a large sum, e.g. it may be quoted as the price of a pig.

CEREMONIAL CURRENCY

Two kinds of ceremonial currency are in use, one much more highly valued than the other.

The less valuable kind consists of strings of shell disks ground flat and pierced with a central hole. This type of currency is found over a large area of Melanesia. Although it is made in other islands of the Solomon group (Codrington, 1891, p. 325, Ivens, 1927,